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Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

S E C R E T STATE 128932

NO FOREIGN DISSEM

E.O.11652: XGDS 5 B(2)
TAGS: PFOR, CH, VN
SUBJECT: PEKING AND HANOI, AFTER THE PEACE SETTLEMENT

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF INR INTELLIGENCE NOTE REAN-30

1. PEKING'S CURRENT DESIRE FOR DETENTE WITH THE UNITED STATES IS BEST SERVED IN INDOCHINA BY A LOW LEVEL OF MILITARY ACTIVITY THAT WILL ENCOURAGE FURTHER US DISENGAGEMENT. HANOI MAY WELL HAVE RESENTED THE INCREASED PRESSURES FOR SETTLEMENT IMPOSED ON IT BY PEKING'S (AND MOSCOW'S) DESIRE FOR DETENTE; BUT, DESPITE SOME DIFFERENCE IN RHETORIC, HANOI AND PEKING DO NOT SEEM TO DIFFER SIGNIFICANTLY OVER CURRENT TACTICS IN SOUTH VIETNAM. PEKING APPARENTLY PLANS TO CONTINUE SOME MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT TO HANOI WHILE DISCREETLY SIGNALLING TO THE US THAT IT IS TRYING TO
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BE HELPFUL ON THE VIETNAM PROBLEM.

2. OVER THE LONGER TERM, HANOI AND PEKING ARE LIKELY TO BE SOMEWHAT WARY OF EACH OTHER AS LONG AS INDOCHINA REMAINS

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UNSTABLE. BOTH RECOGNIZE THAT PEKING'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES COULD COME INTO CONFLICT WITH ITS INTEREST IN AN ULTIMATE NORTH VIETNAMESE VICTORY AND IN MAINTAINING INFLUENCE IN HANOI.

3. PEKING'S EMPHASIS -- EVERYTHING FOR PEACE. PEKING'S EFFORTS TO COMMUNICATE ITS GOOD INTENTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE INDOCHINA PROBLEM HAVE BEEN CARRIED TO THE POINT WHERE PEKING'S AND HANOI'S INTERESTS SEEMED SERIOUSLY DIVERGENT. CHINESE MEDIA HAVE WORKED OVERTIME TO TONE DOWN EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR HANOI OR CRITICISM OF THE US. SIMILARLY CHINESE OFFICIALS AND DIPLOMATS HAVE TAKEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO DROP HINTS OF PEKING'S NEW WILLING-NESS TO USE ITS INFLUENCE IN HANOI IN THE CAUSE OF "PEACE".

4. LONG BEFORE THE FIRST CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT CHINESE OFFICIAL STATEMENTS AND MEDIA COMMENTARY BEGAN TO DIVERGE SIGNIFICANTLY FROM HANOI'S COMMENTARY. STRIDENT ATTACKS ON THE US AND PRESIDENT NIXON WERE OMITTED WHEN PEKING REBROADCAST NORTH VIETNAMESE ARTICLES. SUGGESTIONS THAT CHINESE NATIONAL INTEREST IS AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENTS IN VIETNAM HAVE BEEN NOTABLY LACKING, EVEN WHEN THE US STEPPED-UP INTERDICTION EFFORTS AGAINST HANOI. SINCE THE CEASEFIRE, CHINESE COMMENTARY HAS TAKEN A VERY RELAXED VIEW OF VIOLATIONS -- WHICH THEY SOMETIMES SEEM TO ATTRI-BUTE ABOUT EQUALLY TO BOTH SIDES -- ON THE GROUNDS THAT SUCH MINOR SKIRMISHES WERE ABOUT WHAT ONE WOULD EXPECT IN VIEW OF THE LONG WAR. CONSISTENTLY THE CHINESE HAVE EMPHASIZED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEASEFIRE, WITHOUT, HOWEVER, SUPPORTING HANOI'S SPECIFIC DEMANDS. AT THE CLOSE OF THE LE DUAN/PHOM VAN DONG VISIT TO PEKING IN EARLY JUNE, CHINESE RADIO STRESSED THAT THE PURPOSE OF FUTURE AID FOR NORTH VIETNAM "IS, AFTER THE END OF WAR IN VIETNAM, TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF WAR THERE, REHABILITATE AND DEVELOP ITS NATIONAL ECONOMY AND STRENGTHEN ITS NATURAL

DEFENSE CAPABILITY AND TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE MILITARY FRIENDHSIP AND UNITY" OF THE CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE PEOPLE.

5. PEKING'S PUBLIC LINE HAS BEEN ECHOED IN CONVERSA-TIONS WITH FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AND OTHERS EMPHASIZING THAT PEKING WANTS HANOI TO AGREE TO A SETTLEMENT AND TO COMPLY FULLY WITH IT IN ORDER TO PERMIT THE CHINESE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE US. IN A NUMBER OF CASES, HOW-EVER, THE CHINESE CLEARLY EXPECTED THESE CONVERSATIONS TO BE REPEATED BACK IN SOME FORM OR OTHER TO THE AMERICANS; SUCH PRIVATE "SIGNALS" SEEM PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN CON-VERSATIONS BETWEEN HIGH CHINESE OFFICIALS AND WESTERN

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VISITORS AND THOSE OF SOME CHINESE DIPLOMATS SERVING IN NEUTRAL OR WESTERN CAPITALS.

6. BUT DOES THIS REFLECT A POLICY CONFLICT? ALTHOUGH SIGNS OF STRAINS BETWEEN HANOI AND PEKING ARE EVIDENT, IT APPEARS THAT FOR THE PRESENT PEKING AND HANOI AGREE GENERALLY BOTH ON THEIR DIAGNOSIS OF THE INDOCHINA SITUATION AND ON WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT. BOTH APPARENTLY BELIEVE THAT AMERICAN DISENGAGEMENT FROM VIETNAM WILL SET IN MOTION FAVORABLE HISTORICAL TRENDS THROUGHOUT SOUTHEAST ASIA. BOTH APPARENTLY DO NOT SEE MUCH POSSIBILITY THAT THE PRESENT SAIGON REGIME CAN SURVIVE INDEFINITELY. BOTH APPARENTLY BELIEVE THAT A PERIOD OF MILITARY RETRENCHMENT AND POLITICAL REBUILDING WOULD BE USEFUL BEFORE SHIFTING TO A NEW STAGE OF THE CONFLICT. BOTH SEE LOW LEVELS OF MILITARY ACTIVITY OVER A RELATIVELY LONG PERIOD AS THE BEST WAY TO FORESTALL FURTHER US INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA.

7. WHILE NOT ABANDONING ITS GOAL OF TAKING OVER THE SOUTH, HANOI HAS APPARENTLY MODIFIED ITS TIMETABLE SIGNIFICANTLY AND IS EMPHASIZING POLITICAL RATHER THAN DRAMATIC MILITARY ACTION. IT WANTS TO BE PREPARED TO TAKE SUCH ACTION OF NECESSARY, HOWEVER, AND IS GETTING A GOOD DEAL OF HELP FROM PEKING FOR THIS PURPOSE. A VERY HIGH LEVEL OF CHINESE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE APPARENTLY CONTINUED RIGHT UP TO THE CEASEFIRE; SUBSEQUENTLY, AS A

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RESULT OF THE RECENT LE DUAN AND PHAM VAN DONG VISIT, ADDITIONAL AID WAS PROMISED AT AN UNKNOWN BUT PRESUMABLY LOWER LEVEL. THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER SUGGESTIONS THAT PEKING PLANS TO CONTINUE ITS ASSISTANCE EVEN THOUGH IT RECOGNIZES PAST NORTH VIETNAMESE OBSTINACY ABOUT HEEDING ALL ASPECTS OF THE CHINESE ADVICE.

8. WE KNOW LITTLE ABOUT THE ADVICE PEKING WAS AND IS OFFERING HANOI BUT SUCH EVIDENCE AS WE HAVE DOES NOT INDICATE THAT PEKING IS INVARIABLY SOFT WHERE HANOI IS HARD. FOR EXAMPLE, IN SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH FOREIGNERS BEFORE THE FIRST CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT THE CHINESE REPORTEDLY WERE SUPPORTING AN IMMEDIATE CESSATION OF THE WAR AND NORMALIZATION OF PRC/US RELATIONS WHILE INSISTING THAT THE DRV/PRG PROPOSALS REPRESENTED REASONABLE TERMS FOR SETTLING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT. IN OTHER CONVERSATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENTARY THERE IS EVEN A HINT THAT THE CHINESE BELIEVE HANOI CONCEDED TOO MUCH.

9. FOR THE PRESENT -- A PARALLEL COURSE. CHINESE,AS WELL AS SOVIET, PRESSURE UNDOUBTEDLY PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN INFLUENCING HANOI TO OPT FOR A CEASEFIRE AND A LOW MILITARY POSTURE. HOWEVER, HANOI'S OWN PERCEPTIONS OF PROB-

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LEMS AND PROSPECTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM ALSO PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN CONVINCING THE NORTH VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP TO ADOPT A LOWER RISK, LARGELY POLITICAL STRATEGY. WHATEVER HANOI'S INITIAL MOTIVATION MAY HAVE BEEN, THERE IS NO SIGN THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE NOW CONSIDERING ABANDONING THE STRUGGLE OR THAT PEKING EXPECTS THEM TO DO SO. THERE IS ALSO NO INDICATION THE NORTH VIETNAMESE POLITBURO IS HAVING SERIOUS SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT ITS STRATEGY; RATHER THE NORTH VIETNAMESE SEEM REMARKABLY CONFIDENT THAT THEIR STRATEGY WILL BRING THEM ULTIMATE VICTORY.

10.. IT IS DOUBTFUL THE CHINESE BUY ALL ASPECTS OF HANOI'S ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION OR EVERY FEATURE OF ITS STRATEGY. HOWEVER, EVEN THOUGH PEKING'S PUBLIC POSTURE AND PRIVATE SIGNALS ARE AN IMPLICIT WARNING TO HANOI AGAINST ESCALATING THE CONFLICT, HANOI'S PRESENT STRATEGY IS QUITE

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CONSONANT WITH PEKING'S INTEREST IN SEEKING A FINAL SOLUTION TO THE VIETNAMESE PROBLEM WHILE AVOIDING ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT DISRUPT THE DEVELOPIN

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